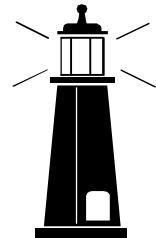


The Beacon



DoD DOE EPA FEMA FBI HHS

NDPO ESTABLISHES PROGRAM AREAS

The National Domestic Preparedness Office has been established to provide assistance to the state and local first responder community in all areas involving WMD. In order to accomplish this task, the NDPO has established specific program areas that will concentrate on planning, training, exercises, outreach, and equipment research and development. Detailed implementation procedures are still being developed with the responsible federal departments and agencies, and in conjunction with State and local advisors. Shown below is the initial focus for each of the NDPO areas.

Planning:

The NDPO Planning Program will build on existing programs, structures, and relationships for coordinating Federal, State and local WMD planning efforts. The FBI will continue to coordinate and support crisis management planning. FEMA will continue to coordinate and support consequence management planning using the Federal Response Plan. The NDPO Planning Program will assist in the integration, development, and improvement of state and local WMD crisis and consequence management plans to better interface with federal WMD response plans.

The NDPO will coordinate with state and local WMD crisis and consequence planners and managers to better integrate the federal response with the Incident Command System (ICS). The NDPO will also address planning related lessons learned from WMD responses and exercises, and provide information to the field concerning common planning issues and suggested solutions. In addition, the NDPO, working with the FBI and FEMA, will assist in identifying and eliminating shortfalls and gaps in state and local WMD crisis and consequence management plans and how they interface with federal plans. Finally, the NDPO will integrate the health care community into the planning, evaluation, and implementation of the nation's preparedness and response to terrorism.

Training:

The NDPO Training Program will provide a clearinghouse for available training in the area of domestic preparedness as it relates to responding to terrorist incidents involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and will provide a mechanism whereby domestic preparedness training needs are assessed; training solutions identified and/or developed, standardized, tiered, and evaluated; and, delivery of training to the response community is coordinated.

The NDPO is establishing a training program involving representatives from the Department Of Justice (DOJ), the Department Of Defense (DOD), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Guard (NG), and experts from other disciplines, as appropriate.

The NDPO will further establish a mechanism for identifying available training, beginning with training which is available from the federal departments and agencies. In addition, the NDPO will implement a needs assessment process for communities to determine their training requirements. The NDPO will also ensure that training solutions (based on the specific needs of the target community) are identified and/or developed, standardized and tiered, and their delivery to the response community is coordinated. Finally, the NDPO will evaluate available training on an ongoing basis to ensure that new techniques and technologies are integrated.

Equipment/Research and Development:

The NDPO Equipment/R&D Program will facilitate and coordinate efforts of the federal government to provide the responder community with detection, protection, analysis, and decontamination equipment necessary to prepare for, and respond to, an incident involving WMD.

The NDPO will commission an annual board consisting of interagency officials from various local, state and federal agencies to establish, maintain and update a national standardized equipment list for use by the interagency community in preparing for and responding to WMD terrorism.

The NDPO will also organize the Inter-Agency Board (IAB) into six subgroups to address equipment related issues involving the medical field, personal protective and operational equipment, collective protection equipment, science and technology, interoperable communications and information systems, detection and decontamination equipment, and overall standards for each.

Exercise:

The NDPO Exercise Program will provide recommendations, guidance and technical support for WMD exercises, by offering a standardized approach to planning, conducting, and facilitation of lessons learned.

The NDPO will offer exercise templates for states and local communities wishing to conduct WMD exercises. The NDPO will also offer technical assistance to states and local communities preparing and conducting exercises. In addition, the NDPO will establish a “lessons learned” process for exchanging information and to identify trends in WMD response exercises and operations. Finally, the NDPO will incorporate the Planning, Training, and Equipment/Research and Development programs of the NDPO to correct shortfalls in either planning, training or equipment as they become apparent through the lessons learned process.

WMD PLANNING PAYS OFF

Due to the recent incidents involving Anthrax hoax letters, several cities and communities around

the country have held planning meetings to discuss procedures for responding to such letters. One of these meetings took place in Dallas, Texas on November 3rd, when officials from the Dallas Police Department and the Dallas Fire Department met with U.S. Postal Inspectors and FBI Agents to exchange intelligence information and discuss response strategies.

The meeting proved to be beneficial on December 4th, when employees at the U.S. Post Office in Coppel, Texas came across a vial of liquid with a note identifying it as Anthrax. Recalling the procedures discussed at the November 3rd meeting, the Postal Inspector contacted the Dallas FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), who in turn notified the Dallas Police Department.

A conference call was then made to the Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) at FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C., at approximately 3:40 a.m. (CST). The conference call put the SIOC in direct communication with on-scene officials from all of the responding departments and agencies. Through a combined and coordinated effort, the incident was successfully resolved, thanks to the plans and procedures which were already in place between the local, state, and federal partners responding to a possible WMD incident.

ON THE HORIZON

The NDPO is currently working with the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to establish policies and procedures for WMD Domestic Preparedness Equipment Grants for state and local first responders. Among the issues being discussed are: criteria for grant eligibility, standardized equipment lists, and timelines for submitting grant proposals. The NDPO hopes that the OJP grant applications will be made available to the first responder community sometime in March of 1999.

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